



CITY OF DANBURY OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE

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Livable Neighborhoods 2013 *“Building a Better Danbury”*

May 2013

May 23, 2013

Honorable Mayor Boughton and City Council Members:

Below is a table highlighting UNIT activity from the time of last month’s City Council report. This does not include any UNIT activity regarding follow up and re-inspection work from previously noted issues. The UNIT works to ensure that each and every issue is resolved as quickly as possible.

Time Period	April 29 – May 23, 2013
Number of Quality of Life Issues	87
Year to Date	407

The top issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Properties with debris on it
- Illegal Apartments/Overcrowding, Unpermitted Construction
- Miscellaneous
- Unregistered/abandoned cars

The last few weeks continue to be very busy for our department. UNIT member and PO Ken Utter and I spent several days over the recent weeks removing graffiti around town. Areas such as bridges, power supply boxes and light poles randomly get tagged and this greatly reduces the quality of life in our community. While it’s extremely difficult to catch these individuals, PO Utter has some leads and we hope that it can lead to an arrest. In the meantime, it is important to stay on top of the removal of such graffiti as the “Broken Windows” theory suggests; if it is not taken care of swiftly, then it will spread out of control. If you drive around town and you don’t notice a problem with graffiti, this is a fantastic thing. It’s also because our department spends a great deal of time and care ensuring that it is remediated right away.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS:

\$219 FINE ISSUED FOR ILLEGAL DUMPING:

On Tuesday, May 14th, the UNIT received a phone call from a resident concerned about the dumping of several garbage bags in the woods between Fairfield Ridge and Putnam Drive. This area of woods is a common pedestrian cut through between the two neighborhoods. Our inspection revealed five garbage bags that were tossed into thick brush and upon digging through the garbage; we came across personal information of a resident who lives in the adjacent Fairfield Ridge neighborhood. After speaking to the resident, the UNIT issued a \$219 ticket for Illegal Dumping and also required the individual to clean everything up. Needless to say, everything was cleaned up and removed by this resident by the end of the day.

Unfortunately, illegal dumping is a continual problem in our community. The UNIT investigates each incident hoping that it will lead back to the guilty party responsible for this crime. While the result is not often successful, at times when our investigation does lead to someone, the penalty of \$219 is assessed and they are required to clean it within 24 hours. Our department ensures that the mess gets cleaned up quickly. Thank you to the Highway Department for their continual partnership with our department as we work diligently to keep Danbury clean. Additionally, we encourage all residents to be alert in their community and contact the UNIT and/or Danbury Police if they ever witness any such dumping taking place.

REFERRALS FROM DFD AND DPD:

Our department commonly receives referrals from the Police and Fire Departments . As they respond to and address emergency concerns in the community, these departments routinely notice health and safety related issues within the residence and will ask the UNIT for assistance in resolving them. In the last two weeks, our department handled a couple of cases referred to us by both the Police and Fire Departments.

FRANKLIN ST:

DFD contacted the UNIT upon responding to the residence for a medical emergency. The patient had been treated and taken to the hospital and since released, however, EMS felt obligated to report to our department the deplorable conditions inside the house. This single family house appeared to have fire safety and sanitary issues and FD asked for our assistance to work with the homeowner to remediate them. The UNIT coordinated with the Health and Fire Marshal departments to inspect the home. While undergoing the inspection, it was apparent that the house had been cleaned, however, there was a resident in one of the bedrooms in poor health. This was not the one that had required medical attention a few days earlier. It seemed apparent that this resident had suffered from a stroke or some other issue that impaired his speech and the conditions of his bedroom were completely unsanitary. The mattress and blankets were soiled in feces and infested with bed bugs. While the resident was originally hesitant to receiving any medical care, he finally agreed to go to the hospital for evaluation and treatment. At this time, he is being treated for his condition and the crisis intervention department at Danbury Hospital

is overseeing his care. Thank you to DFD Asst Chief Meehan, DFD, EMS, DPD and the Health Dept with assisting the UNIT on this issue.

SMITH ST:

DPD contacted the UNIT after they had been in this residence fulfilling a search warrant. The detective seemed concerned with the number of people living in the home, most notably with the multiple bedrooms that were created in the basement. The basement did not have any windows, so anyone's safety sleeping in this area of the home would be at risk, therefore, no one can be sleeping in the basement. The UNIT, along with Fire Marshal Perry, coordinated an inspection of the home. Essentially, the inspection revealed several fire safety concerns; the biggest issue being a bedroom in the basement. The property owner was responsible for ensuring that the bedroom was vacated that day and could not ever be used for that purpose. Furthermore, this was not the first time that the UNIT had been involved at this residence, and as a result, the property owner is being required to remove any and all unpermitted walls built in the basement, regardless of the fact that he claimed the walls were there when he bought the home. It's imperative that this issue be resolved once and for all and with the walls removed, the likelihood for this problem resurfacing at this residence will be greatly reduced. The property owner was also required to install smoke detectors and replace locks on the bedroom doors. All a part of improving fire safety in the home.

Approximately three weeks ago, a home on Stillman Avenue was destroyed by fire. It was revealed that there was an unpermitted basement apartment in this house and that the residents were very lucky to escape the fire without injury (one dog perished) because it spread extremely quickly. It's impossible for the UNIT or any department within City Hall to identify all homes with unsafe living conditions in the basement and/or attic, but we take this very seriously as this recent fire proves that lives are at stake. The UNIT appreciates the partnership of the DPD and are grateful that they recognized this as a problem and contacted our department.

311 Call Center Report: May 2013

The month of May saw the 311 Call Center receive approximately 750 calls, with requests for phone numbers bringing the highest total at 173 inquiries. The spring yard debris pickup program brought 42 calls and 21 residents called for information on where they can dispose of household garbage. Seventeen calls were placed for information regarding the recycling truck while 11 additional calls were placed regarding Household Hazardous Waste Day (May 25 in Newtown). As the spring progresses as we move closer to summer, residents are reminded to report overgrown branches and bushes into the road and sidewalks. The late spring/early summer months typically bring an increase of calls from residents seeking information on activities throughout Danbury. By working with local businesses and agencies, the 311 Call Center has a vast information database and immediate access to all of the events and activities that will occur throughout the summer.

The UNIT continues to encourage the participation of Danbury's residents to report any concerns in their neighborhood by utilizing the City Line 311 system. Residents of Danbury can simply dial 311 from their home phones, or 203-744-4311 from out of town or cell phones. Additionally, residents can log on to the City's webpage, www.ci.danbury.ct.us, and click on the City Line 311 link and register their complaint at their convenience, and now, residents can utilize the Danbury Direct app from their iPhone to submit a concern or question. Residents can choose to provide their contact information, so the UNIT can follow up and provide an update on the situation. By visiting the Neighborhood Assistance Department on the City's website, residents will also be able to view the UNIT's monthly activity.

If we can be of any assistance to you or residents in your ward please contact us at 796-8026 or 311.

Sincerely,

Shawn Stillman
Coordinator, Office of Neighborhood Assistance